

TWINS *2*MIWT

— more than double

Ask parents of twins, and they'll tell you that one plus one is much greater than two. This isn't new math—it's the amount of love (and work) you get when you have two babies at once.

Prepare for double exposure

Most parents have some advance notice that they'll be bringing two babies home from the hospital. Here are some things you can do ahead of time to make homecoming with twins easier.

- Cook ahead. Make a variety of dinners, lunches, and snacks, and freeze them.
- Stock up. Buy large quantities of diapers, formula (if you're formula-feeding), and laundry detergent.
- Delegate responsibilities. Sign up relatives and friends to help you in the first few weeks—or longer. Keep a running to-do list for friends and relatives who are eager to help. Let them do your cooking and cleaning or arrange potluck dinners.
- Get a jump on childbirth classes. Be prepared in the event that your twins arrive early.
- Have a plan. Sit down with dad and plan how you'll split child-care responsibilities—for example, a schedule for tag-team midnight feedings. Write out some proposed schedules, but stay flexible and reprioritize when necessary.
- Read up on twins. There are many good books on the subject of twins that can give you helpful upbringing tips.

Baby x 2

Once your babies are home, be prepared for a hectic lifestyle. Here are some tips for squeezing

twice the amount of care into a typical busy day.

- Get the older kids involved. If you have older children, get them to help with baby care and household chores. Since so much of your attention will be focused on your new twins, letting an older child help will keep her involved with you as well as the babies.
- Plan for snooze breaks. Twins are twice the fun but at least twice the work. You'll be tired for the first few months, so plan on taking naps whenever you can.
- Stay upbeat. There may be days when your new responsibilities, sleep deprivation, and recuperating body gang up and give you the blues. Try to keep a positive outlook and perspective.
- Divide and conquer. Start out bathing the infants one at a time. Then, when they can safely sit up and support themselves at about four or five months, you can give them a bath together.
- Seeing double. As your babies become more mobile, you'll have to become doubly aware. Keeping an eye on where they are and what they're doing takes some practice, but you'll have plenty of time to learn as they begin to crawl.

Seek out other parents of twins

The best resources for raising twins are the parents of twins. Contact and join your local twins organization. Talking with other experienced moms and dads will be a great help. You also can surf the Internet for a support group.